

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 21, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) thanks you and the Committee for introducing S. 1281, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005, and in guiding it through a successful markup by the Committee. In anticipation of consideration of this bill by the full Senate, we would like to share with you our views on this legislation.

NASA supports Senate passage of S. 1281 and the Manager's Amendment and appreciates that the bill implements many of the elements of the Vision for Space Exploration and incorporates a significant number of the legislative provisions NASA had proposed in its submission to Congress earlier this year. S. 1281 provides many of the policies and tools necessary to achieve the fundamental goal of the President's directive "...to advance U.S. scientific, security, and economic interests through a robust space exploration program." However, we have concerns with several of the bill's provisions that must be satisfactorily addressed prior to final enactment of reauthorization legislation. The concerns outlined below have been discussed with the Committee, and we understand that a Manager's Amendment will address many of them.

NASA's primary concern with the bill is with the provisions related to the continued operations of the Space Shuttle after 2010. As reported by the Committee, Section 302 of S. 1281 included a provision that would prohibit retirement of the Space Shuttle orbiter prior to the demonstration of a crew rated replacement system for continuous access to space. We understand that ongoing talks regarding the continuous access to space issue and the retirement of the Space Shuttle orbiter have resolved the question of whether or not the Space Shuttle orbiter can be retired in 2010 in a manner that makes S. 1281 consistent with Administration policy.

The Administration is committed to retirement of the Space Shuttle by 2010 and accelerating development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV). Our earlier plans

called for operational deployment of the CEV no later than 2014. The Administration is now seeking programmatic alternatives for accelerating development of the CEV as soon as possible, and in the President's FY 2006 budget amendment, submitted to Congress on July 15, 2005, redirects funds within the Exploration program for this purpose.

Our second major concern is that the bill also specifically mandates that several research disciplines be pursued on the ISS and requires that the ISS design be capable of supporting six crewmembers. NASA is currently conducting studies regarding the optimum configuration, research agenda, and assembly sequence for the Space Station. We are concerned that a technical solution that is legislatively mandated before these studies are complete might leave the Nation with a less-than-optimum research agenda and configuration for the Space Station. We plan to share our studies with the Congress in September.

On behalf of the Administration, NASA recently submitted to the Congress a proposed amendment to the Iran Non Proliferation Act of 2000 (INA) (P.L. 106-178) to be added to NASA authorization legislation or another appropriate legislative vehicle. The proposed amendment presents a balanced approach which first and foremost maintains U.S. nonproliferation principles and objectives, while also maintaining the cooperative U.S.-Russia space partnership.

Beginning in April 2006, INA restrictions could prevent the U.S. from maintaining U.S. crewmembers on the International Space Station except during brief Space Shuttle visits. INA restrictions will affect NASA's ability to meet U.S. obligations to the International Space Station Partners under existing Station agreements, including crew rescue capability. INA restrictions could also prevent the U.S. from effective use of Russian capabilities in support of human space exploration. Removing the restriction on payments related to human space flight will enable the U.S. to take advantage of unique Russian capabilities and provide parity between NASA and DoD in acquiring Russian capabilities. U.S.-Russia space cooperation is an area of the overall U.S.-Russia relationship that has had marked success and should be preserved. NASA strongly urges enactment of this important amendment.

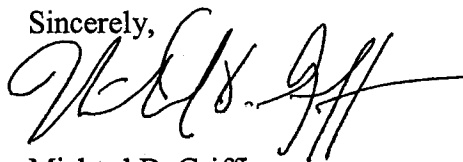
We support the funding provisions of the bill to the extent that it fully funds the President's budget request for fiscal year 2006. We note, however, that funding authorized for FY 2006 and beyond exceeds the President's budget request; including a directed increase in FY 2006 of \$100,000,000 for additional Space Station research. To achieve the Vision for Space Exploration, NASA is proceeding, as directed by the President, to plan and implement a sustainable and affordable, integrated robotic and human exploration program, structured with measurable milestones, and executed on the basis of available resources, accumulated experience, and technology readiness. We are sensitive to the priorities of all affected research communities and seek to balance among all research, including planetary science, earth science, solar physics, and astronomy (as section 131 of this bill would direct). While we appreciate the support that additional funding represents, in these times of limited budgetary resources and the

Administration's efforts to reduce the deficit, we cannot support such an increase, which raises expectations to a level that is unaffordable and likely unachievable.

We value the Committee's leadership in articulating legislation for U.S. civil aeronautics and space, and we look forward to working with the Committee and the Congress on improvements as the bill moves through the legislative process. We are particularly pleased that the Bill emphasizes commercial support of the ISS and the Vision for Space Exploration and provides authority for the Centennial Challenge prize program, as contained in Section 402, and the administrative improvements in title V.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to transmittal of this letter from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. D. Griffin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael D. Griffin
Administrator

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 21, 2005

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Co-Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Inouye:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) thanks you and the Committee for introducing S. 1281, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005, and in guiding it through a successful markup by the Committee. In anticipation of consideration of this bill by the full Senate, we would like to share with you our views on this legislation.

NASA supports Senate passage of S. 1281 and the Manager's Amendment and appreciates that the bill implements many of the elements of the Vision for Space Exploration and incorporates a significant number of the legislative provisions NASA had proposed in its submission to Congress earlier this year. S. 1281 provides many of the policies and tools necessary to achieve the fundamental goal of the President's directive "...to advance U.S. scientific, security, and economic interests through a robust space exploration program." However, we have concerns with several of the bill's provisions that must be satisfactorily addressed prior to final enactment of reauthorization legislation. The concerns outlined below have been discussed with the Committee, and we understand that a Manager's Amendment will address many of them.

NASA's primary concern with the bill is with the provisions related to the continued operations of the Space Shuttle after 2010. As reported by the Committee, Section 302 of S. 1281 included a provision that would prohibit retirement of the Space Shuttle orbiter prior to the demonstration of a crew rated replacement system for continuous access to space. We understand that ongoing talks regarding the continuous access to space issue and the retirement of the Space Shuttle orbiter have resolved the question of whether or not the Space Shuttle orbiter can be retired in 2010 in a manner that makes S. 1281 consistent with Administration policy.

The Administration is committed to retirement of the Space Shuttle by 2010 and accelerating development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV). Our earlier plans

called for operational deployment of the CEV no later than 2014. The Administration is now seeking programmatic alternatives for accelerating development of the CEV as soon as possible, and in the President's FY 2006 budget amendment, submitted to Congress on July 15, 2005, redirects funds within the Exploration program for this purpose.

Our second major concern is that the bill also specifically mandates that several research disciplines be pursued on the ISS and requires that the ISS design be capable of supporting six crewmembers. NASA is currently conducting studies regarding the optimum configuration, research agenda, and assembly sequence for the Space Station. We are concerned that a technical solution that is legislatively mandated before these studies are complete might leave the Nation with a less-than-optimum research agenda and configuration for the Space Station. We plan to share our studies with the Congress in September.

On behalf of the Administration, NASA recently submitted to the Congress a proposed amendment to the Iran Non Proliferation Act of 2000 (INA) (P.L. 106-178) to be added to NASA authorization legislation or another appropriate legislative vehicle. The proposed amendment presents a balanced approach which first and foremost maintains U.S. nonproliferation principles and objectives, while also maintaining the cooperative U.S.-Russia space partnership.

Beginning in April 2006, INA restrictions could prevent the U.S. from maintaining U.S. crewmembers on the International Space Station except during brief Space Shuttle visits. INA restrictions will affect NASA's ability to meet U.S. obligations to the International Space Station Partners under existing Station agreements, including crew rescue capability. INA restrictions could also prevent the U.S. from effective use of Russian capabilities in support of human space exploration. Removing the restriction on payments related to human space flight will enable the U.S. to take advantage of unique Russian capabilities and provide parity between NASA and DoD in acquiring Russian capabilities. U.S.-Russia space cooperation is an area of the overall U.S.-Russia relationship that has had marked success and should be preserved. NASA strongly urges enactment of this important amendment.

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Michael D. Griffin
Administrator

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 21, 2005

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Chair
Subcommittee on Science and Space
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

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Administrator

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 21, 2005

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on Science and Space
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, Dc 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

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Michael D. Griffin
Administrator